THE LIFE OF ANN KIRKMAN HOWARTH

By Sarah Jane H. Luke

My mother's father, James Kirkman was born October 8, 1823 at Breightmet, Lancshire, England and died February 27, 1874. Her mother, Mary Haslam, was born January 20, 1823 at Tong, Lancshire, England and died May 22, 1880. Her father was baptised into the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on November 21, 1843 at Breightmet by Thomas Livsey and was confirmed by Samuel Ramsden. He was ordained a teacher September 23, 1849 by Samuel Ramsden and a priest May 4, 1851 by him also, and an elder May 15, 1856 by William Smith.

Their first child, Ellen, was born October 20, 1844 so this shows that all of their children were born in the church. My mother, Ann Kirkman, was the fourth child and was born the ninth of October 1850 at Darcy Leaver, England and was baptised September 20, 1861 by her father and on the 29 she was confirmed by Joseph Booth.

She worked at Grey's Weaving Mills begining at the age of seven and when she decided to come to Zion she very capably handled four looms at a time. She lived at Leaver Bridge Ferris, Dorcy Leaver which consisted of eight houses in a row. The Kirkman homelife portrayed Mormonism perfectly because of the peace, joy, and love that abounded there. Songs of Zion were sung and music was played which contributed to the harmonious atmosphere and helped them to enjoy the spirit of the gospel. This family was the only one belonging to the church in the village and they must have been ridiculed in the usual way. She was the first member of her family to leave her native land and come to Zion, her father dying seven months before she left home. He was president of the Bolton Branch in the Manchester conference for a number of years before his death and he was very sorry that he was unable to convince everybody to see and understand the gospel as he did. Mother was a member of the Sunday School Choir of this branch and took part in all the activities of the branch. Leaving her mother, five sisters and two brothers for the gospel, she immigrated to Utah September 2, 1874, and was six weeks crossing the ocean. Her mother did not want her to come to Zion as so many stories about polygamy had been circulated, giving the impression that all the missionaries wanted them to come for, was to marry them. When she first told her mother she wanted to come her mother told her she would cut her throat before she would permit it and mother was quite frightened and couldn't sleep for many nights for fear her mother would carry out her threat.

When she saw that mother was determined to come she decided it was best to let her come and consequently she went to the dock with her and gave mother a shilling which she kept until the day of her death. As the boat sailed out to sea they waved their handkerchiefs at each other until they were out of sight. After the death of her mother which occured in 1880, four sisters and one brother came to this country and they are all dead with the exception of two sisters. One sister never left England and she told mother if she came to Utah that she would not write the scratch of a pen and she kept her word. Later she left the church and joined the church of England for her husband's sake, and expired in April 1924.

Mother's uncle Robert Kirkman immigrated to Zion in November 1856 bringing his family, and their five month old baby boy died as did he also and they were buried on the plains in the same grave November 11, 1856. When mother was crossing the plains she had a funny feeling which she was unable to describe and when she saw aunt Mary Kirkman she related the incident to her, giving the location, and her aunt said it was the place where Uncle Robert was buried. This particular fore-knowledge was given to mother as a spiritual gift and she often had a feeling of things not being exactly as they should and in every case, the feeling was over her at the time something did or would happen.

After arriving in Utah mother went to Springville and lived with her Aunt Mary Kirkman. Later she went to Provo and worked in the Woolen Mills where she taught Reed Smoot to weave and when the yarn was tangled he came and took mother by the arm saying, "Come on Ann and show me what to do." And this was a source of great joy to help all with their weaving.

When the missionaries were in their home in England she used to have their shoes polished and ready every Sunday morning and president Abraham O. Hatch had the privledge while on his mission to stay there. Mother never saw the inside of a school room and could not read or write because of working in the mill so young. She was frail and sickly from the time she was a small child until she was married but she learned a great deal from my father who read to her and she was mentally quick and grasped the ideas he conveyed to her. He taught her to bake bread as she had never done any cooking or house work but when she died at the age of seventy six she was as wonderful a cook as you ever saw and her housekeeping was A-one. Her pies would melt in your mouth and I have heard the neighbors say they used to enjoy going to mothers house because she was so clean one could almost eat off from her floor it was so pretty and white.

While mother was here in Provo whe stayed at the home of John Booth and it was through him that father and mother were married as father and brother Booth were steady correspondents. Father went to Provo and got mother with an ox team and they continued to Salt Lake City where they were married in the old Endowment House October 4, 1875. To that union eight children were born and there were four girls and four boys. She reared these children until they were all men and women and father passed away May 25, 1904. Her oldest son who was twenty eight years of age passed away on the third of June nineteen hundred and five. He left a wife and one child and a second child was born in August. Mother gave them a home and the best care possible.

The death of father and son was a great blow to her but through it all she never complained, for her faith in the Gospel assured her that she had been greatly blessed by leaving all that was near and dear to her to come and embrace the truth. She was a relief society teacher and she visited the homes, gathered wheat, made quilts and paid her tithes and offerings. She used to take her little babies to the field and shock grain, glean wheat, pick ground cherries and all those duties pioneer women had to do.

She was a hard worker and never failed to do her duty to her husband and family. Her work was house cleaning, washing, ironing, or anything she could get to do and make an honest living at it. Providing for the family fell on her shoulders after father got so old he couldn't help and we must remember that he was 20 years older than mother, and she was a widow for twenty-three years. In 1910 she was visited by her four sisters and it was the first time they had all been together in thirty-six years. This proved to be a very happy reunion as they all went to the Salt Lake Temple and did the work for their father and mother and then were all sealed to them.

Mother lived on the same corner for 52 years and the old log house was torn down in 1906, a new frame taking its place which she moved into the day before Thanksgiving. (I understand that she had this home dedicated when it was finished) She had previously sold five acres of hay land in the North field to Andrew Lindsay which furnished the finance to build with. She was very comfortable in it and was happy to have her children near so they could come often and visit her in it. When bidding some one farewell she would never say good bye as that means forever and so it was, "So long". The poor and needy had her help always and though her trials were many she never failed to raise her voice and thank her heavenly Father for his mercy and blessings to her and her family. The last ten years of her life she was very miserable with rheumatism which kept her from doing the things she would liked to have done. One time she was burning the trash and the wind carried the sparks to the pig pen which was quite badly damaged but they were able to save the pigs. In 1926 they had another fire which destroyed the straw stack, car shed and some pigeons and they were fortunate in extinguishing it without further damage.

She passed away the 29 of April 1927 at the age of seventy six and has five living children, thirty seven grandchildren and thirty four great grand children who honor her memory and are thankful she died strongin the faith.